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a theme was furnished him for a fugue for four voices. In half an hour he had performed his part, and immediately received his diploma, an honour which had never before been granted to one of so young an age. He was much sought after in the Court of Tuscany, and wished to remain there, but he was desirous of hastening his journey to Rome, as he was anxious to be present there during the solemnities of the Holy Week. It was at this season that he entered the Eternal City, and it may easily be imagined with what eagerness he would repair to the Sistine chapel to listen to the sublime music for which the services of that holy season are so celebrated. It is well known that of some portions of that music, for instance, the *Miserere* of Allegri, no copies are allowed to be taken, under severe penalties for the infraction of the rule. But the prohibition was useless where Mozart was concerned. He had placed himself in a corner, and gave particular attention to the piece as it proceeded. On leaving the chapel he made a note of the whole, and having, on Good Friday, attended a second performance, and assured himself of the accuracy of the copy which he had made, and which he held concealed in his hat, he attended next day before the Academy, and, to the astonishment of all who heard him, he accompanied himself on the piano, whilst he sang before the assembled musicians the very music of Allegri, which it was supposed no one would be able to give unless furnished with a copy, which the rules of the Vatican had apparently rendered it impossible to obtain. This wonderful feat produced a great sensation in Rome, and people began to believe that the sportive allusion of the Emperor to Mozart's familiar spirit had some foundation in fact, and a report gained ground that the remarkable faculty with which he appeared to be gifted, resided in the talismanic effect of a ring which he wore. On hearing this, the supposed magician drew the ring from his finger, and showed the groundlessness of the current idea by exhibiting no signs of any diminution of that wonderful power of execution which had hitherto astonished his auditors. Mozart's triumph was now complete. He was loaded with honours and admitted to an audience by the Pope, Clement XIV., who desired that the extraordinary child should be presented to him. The Holy Father, far from upbraiding him for having transgressed the rule laid down relative to Allegri's music, accorded to him a most gracious reception, and in recognition of his wonderful talents, Mozart received from the hands of the Pontiff the cross and order of a knight of the Golden Spur.

We are now approaching that period of Mozart's career when the scene changes, when—the wonder of his childhood having passed away—the world seemed to grow indifferent to its former idol, and when, instead of being caressed by princes and extolled by musicians and *dilettanti*, he was doomed to encounter opposition and to struggle with poverty. Not long before his departure for Italy he had been appointed chapel master to the Archbishop of Cologne, but that prelate seems to have been incapable of appreciating the value of Mozart's talent. The latter had laboured most assiduously in his service, and had produced a number of compositions, including masses, litanies, and concertos, but was never able to awaken the apathetic ecclesiastic to a sense of his merit, or to extort from him any augmentation of the scanty pittance which was annexed as a salary to the office which he held. He had longed for his fatherland, but arrived there only to become more and more disgusted with the treatment to which he was now ignominiously exposed. He resolved, therefore, to abandon his native place, and to try once more his fortune in the world, being on this occasion accompanied by his mother. In the German Courts which he visited, he was admired and applauded as before, for his genius could not fail to attract the attention of all true lovers of music. In Gluck, whose acquaintance he made in Vienna, he found a kindred spirit, and through his society and the study of his works, he acquired those principles of the musical art which were so successfully developed in his subsequent dramatic compositions. He was equally anxious to be introduced to the celebrated Haydn, whom he ever afterwards spoke of and regarded as his master in those studies to which they both so effectually devoted their time and attention. But, much as the commanding genius of Mozart could not fail to be recognised, it seemed powerless to obtain for its possessor more than barren praise. After in vain lingering in Munich in the hope of obtaining from the Elector, who had been one of the most ardent admirers of his early performances, some situation worthy of his talents and of his fame, he at length determined to revisit Paris, and seek in that capital for something more solid than the merely empty honours which he was able to reckon upon in his native country.

(*To be continued.*)

THEATRICAL ORCHESTRAS.

By Henry C. Lunn.

The engagement of an orchestra in a theatre exclusively devoted to dramatic entertainments has always appeared to us one of those absurd anomalies which only exists because nobody thinks of questioning the rationality of it. In the olden times of musical melodramas and operatic comedies, there could be no question that it was an indispensable portion of a theatrical establishment. The lessee had then to engage not only a band, but a director of the music, who was forced to work to order, and consequently to produce innumerable compositions which he might himself despise. If a melodrama, for instance, were brought into the theatre and accepted, a memorandum of the music required was immediately given into the hands of the composer to the theatre, with an understanding that it should be ready for rehearsal on a certain day. As he was usually well up to the *business* of the stage, however, this was generally a work of little time. Tender strains ushered in the "acknowledged heroine;" grim discords announced the villain; "hurries" were got ready for the combats and struggles; and a comic song for the faithful countryman. As the principal female character had been, of course, inveigled from her native village, the overture would usually contain a reminiscence of her happy home, which reminiscence would probably be repeated at intervals throughout the piece, and form a distinguishing feature in the final *tableau*, when the father, mother, and three or four villagers, who had walked five hundred miles over the mountains in search of her, bent over the heroine and pointed up to the flies.

All this was, of course, to the composer a mere mechanical matter, which might, like every other

mechanical matter, be acquired by sufficient practice; but the possession of an orchestra in those times very often urged managers of theatres to commit all sorts of musical absurdities, simply because they felt (and very naturally too) that if the band and the composer had not something of importance to do in the majority of pieces produced, they were really paying them their salaries for nothing. Thus, songs were often introduced into dramas, having not the slightest relation to the situations in which they occurred: and as they were usually sung either by comedians who were not vocalists, or vocalists who were not comedians, it rarely happened that the audience considered them in any other light than as most impertinent interruptions to the dialogue.

"Theatrical music" is now, however, rapidly passing away; and we need scarcely say that, as regards the healthy progress of art and artists, the sooner it is extinct the better; for it is in our recollection that many clever composers have, as hack "directors of the music" at theatres, frittered away a talent which, in a more genial atmosphere, might have been cultivated to a good result.

But how does it happen that, with the dying out of this class of music, the orchestra itself does not die out with it? When the curtain falls, after a burst of intense passion in a drama, or an excellently contrived situation in a witty comedy, does it add to the effect for the band to commence a popular waltz, or the *menuetto* and *trio* from a classical symphony? Does it not involve, too, a most absurd incongruity of ideas to hear (as we did a short time ago) Weber's wonderfully romantic and descriptive overture to *Der Freyschütz* as a prelude to the "screaming" farce of "*The Goose with the Golden Eggs.*" The truth is that in such a situation an orchestra is degrading alike to art and artists; for if the performers of which it is composed are bad, nobody wishes to hear them; and if they are good, their talents are utterly wasted.

It may, however, be asked (in the interest of orchestral performers), if we were to get rid of an organized band in all our theatres, what would become of the many talented instrumentalists who would thus be thrown out of employ? To this we answer most decidedly that it would be the very best thing that could occur for them. The concert-room and the opera-house are their only legitimate homes; and as soon as it is felt that there are competent instrumentalists ready for an engagement, and that theatres have discarded the idea of music, concert-rooms will be opened in the metropolis, and not only will orchestral performers receive constant employment, but they will speedily, by continually practising together, become fully capable of executing the works of the great masters. It is the very fact of the theatres employing orchestras which prevents this idea from being fully carried out; for, as every young performer, as soon as he is competent, applies for a theatrical engagement, it is impossible to train orchestral players to become reliable and ready members of an efficient band for the concert-room. It would, indeed, be a painful reflection were we to consider that the present "music-halls" should in the slightest degree supply the want we have mentioned. It is certainly true that good music has been occasionally performed at these establishments; but, disguise it as we will, there is little doubt that the real attraction has nothing whatever to do with the art, except in its most degraded aspect. "Comic" songs, with neither wit, humour, nor even common sense, to recommend them, are in these "halls" nightly thrust before the audience (if audience it can be rightly called) until some catch-word or line is caught up and repeated in the streets, or even (we are sorry to say) in the drawing-rooms, of our great metropolis, sufficiently often to warrant a publisher in advertising it as the song "everybody is asking for," and in sticking it in his window with an idiotic coloured illustration, which must offend every intelligent person who passes.

Were the idea of establishing concert-rooms, where the highest class of orchestral works could be nightly heard, at a price within the reach of all lovers of music, eventually to be carried out, the absurd discrepancy between the terms given to the most thoroughly competent orchestral players, who have throughout the evening the most onerous duties to perform, and the petted vocalists, who merely sing two or three songs, which they have perhaps known for years by heart, must be forced upon all who are really interested in the result. It is with us, and always has been, a matter of deep regret to see artists of high reputation in the orchestras of theatrical establishments; but when we reflect that some of the very best of these performers, even when they are called upon to play important solo parts in the concert-room, often receive scarcely one quarter of the terms freely given to a second-rate singer at the same concert, it is scarcely to be wondered at that a permanent engagement, even at a small salary, should be retained by them as a reliable source of income. This is, of course, not as it should be; and most assuredly not as it would be, were talent in all departments of the art appreciated according to its intrinsic, and not its current, value. It is no argument to say that people *will* have a thing. People *will* have false jewellery, but real jewellery is always estimated at its worth; and there are those who would rather wear one exquisite gem than cover themselves with imitations to dazzle the eyes of the ignorant. May this not be so with music? Will not true art and true artists one day reign supreme; and when that day arrives, and the best works only are placed before the public, will not those who are most competent to perform them be tempted from a drudging life of small certainty into a bright and hopeful career in the true world of art?

HERR GOLDSCHMIDT'S "RUTH."

THIS "Sacred Pastoral," which was written for and produced at the last Hereford Festival, was performed for the first time in London at Exeter Hall on the 17th ult. The impression made upon us by the work on a first hearing has been strengthened by a second performance; and although there can be no question that the superabundance of accompanied recitative throughout the composition has a somewhat wearying effect, the excellent and musician-like manner in which the subject is handled, and more especially the refined treatment of the character of Ruth, cannot but be felt and acknowledged by all unprejudiced hearers. The dramatic colouring which Herr Goldschmidt has given to the different scenes into which his work is divided is a point which cannot be too highly praised; and it is especially noticeable that where the action of the Oratorio ceases to take place amongst pastoral surroundings, the character of the music is carefully and thoughtfully in keeping with the altered nature of the narrative. Into the choruses the composer has thrown all his strength; the stirring fugue in "The eyes of the Lord" giving unmistakeable proof that he is fully